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1	UNITED STATI	ES BANKRUPTCY COURT
2	NORTHERN DIS	TRICT OF CALIFORNIA
3		-000-
4	In Re:	) Case No. 19-30088 ) Chapter 11
5	PG&E CORPORATION AND PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY,	-
6	Debtors.	) Tuesday, September 13, 2022
7		) REORGANIZED DEBTORS' SEVENTY-
8		NINTH OMNIBUS OBJECTION TO CLAIMS (BOOKS AND RECORDS
9		CLAIMS) FILED BY PG&E CORPORATION [10673]
10		MOTION OF WILLIAM B. ABRAMS
11		PURSUANT TO FEDERAL RULE OF BANKRUPTCY FOR 2004
12		EXAMINATION FOR ENTRY OF AN ORDER AUTHORIZING DISCOVERY
13		AND HEARINGS REGARDING THE ACTS AND CONDUCT OF JAMS
14		NEUTRALS GIVEN NEW EVIDENCE.
15		FILED BY WILLIAM ABRAMS [12766]
16	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS	
17	BEFORE THE HONORABLE DENNIS MONTALI UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE	
18	APPEARANCES (All present by For the Reorganized	video or telephone): THOMAS B. RUPP, ESQ.
19	Debtors:	Keller Benvenutti Kim LLP 550 California Street
20	\$	Suite 1900
21		San Francisco, CA 94018 (415)469-6723
22	_	RON OLINER, ESQ.
23	-	Duane Morris LLP l Market Spear Tower
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25		

1 2 3	capacity as the Trustee of	Brown Rudnick LLP	
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4	For Fire Claimants Majesti Mai Bagorio, etc.:	Baum Hedlund Aristei & Goldman PC 10940 Wilshire Boulevard Suite 1600	
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18	Court Recorder:	LORENA PARADA/ANKEY THOMAS United States Bankruptcy Court	
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25	transcript provided by transcription service.		

	PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company		
1	SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022,		
2	<u>10:00 AM</u>		
3	-000-		
4	(Call to order of the Court.)		
5	THE CLERK: Court is now in session. The Honorable		
6	Dennis Montali presiding.		
7	Calling the matter of PG&E Corporation. And I will		
8	bring in counsel now, Your Honor.		
9	THE COURT: Morning, Mr. Oliner. Nice to see you.		
10	Can you state your appearance, please?		
11	MR. OLINER: Good morning, Your Honor. Ron Oliner,		
12	Dwayne Morris, counsel to Mr. Addington.		
13	THE COURT: Mr. Rupp?		
14	MR. RUPP: Good morning, Your Honor. Thomas Rupp of		
15	Keller, Benvenutti Kim on behalf of the reorganized debtors.		
16	THE COURT: So Mr. Rupp, I got fooled into letting yo		
17	file something at the last minute, but I did read what you		
18	filed last evening.		
19	Mr. Oliner, what's your response there? What's your		
20	pleasure that what we do next?		
21	MR. OLINER: Well, I'm not I don't have a lot of		
22	pleasure after receiving after hours eighteen pages. What I		
23	would like to do is to push things out. And let me explain		
24	why, I guess compelled or wouldn't agree to just kicking this		
25	entire hearing out after I received late, I guess just before		

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Labor Day, a request to push out the dates on your calendar. I

may go a little long here so you can just give me the hook if

you need to, Your Honor.

I got retained in June and contacted Mr. Rupp in early June, long before the new deadline to file the amended claim was filed and tried to see if we could resolve it in a mediation. I also requested that the debtor turn over their files on the Addington property in Piedmont because of their position that in order to fix the property, we needed to proceed by a PG&E-approved engineering plan.

Mr. Rupp has been polite and professional throughout, but came back to me after I requested it again to say that PG&E wouldn't give us their files on our property until we had a contested matter.

So I dutifully -- we dutifully filed an amended claim on time, a little early, and sent it to Mr. Rupp who acknowledged receiving it, and then tried to get this thing back into a mediation, because this needs to be solved and it doesn't need to be litigated.

After that, some exchanges, although I couldn't get much information, Mr. Rupp's -- the debtors' position was they still wouldn't give us our files until we had a contested matter. And we don't have a contested matter until they file an objection.

And then, as I say, late a week or so ago, I think it

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company was on September 1st, two weeks ago, I got an urgent request to kick out this thing. And so I said, all right. As a professional courtesy, file your objection later if you need to, but I wanted this date on as a holding date. And now I read, and I got it after hours as Your Honor did. I know you're an avid reader of everything that's filed, and I did my best to read it this morning, a filing, which is really in the nature of let's go, let's go. You now -- having shifted the burden, it's now incumbent on you, Mr. Addington, to further explain, et cetera, et cetera.

I invoked the rules in any contested matter. And now, since PG&E will not cooperate or give us access to their files on our property, the Rules 9014, the rules to treat this as a contested matter, and if I can't get Mr. Rupp's client to give us their files, I need to engage in discovery.

It's sad that we're here, but they won't mediate.

They won't give us their files. And now I see a pleading which says we're going to jam you up and you Mr. Oliner, and get to file some supplemental thing in two more weeks time. I'm out of town in the next two weeks, so that doesn't work for me.

But that's where we are.

I would like this in summation to be put out. I need to engage in discovery because I don't think Mr. Rupp's client is going to cooperate with us in any way, shape, or form. I'm not prepared to set a date to try this. I've tried innumerable

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company claim objections, but this is nowhere near that because of where we are and the way PG&E has treated us. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Rupp, what's your pleasure?

MR. RUPP: Thank you, Your Honor.

I just, again, want to back up from the perspective of the debtors. This goes back to the hearing on May 10th, where Your Honor allowed Mr. Addington to file an amended claim. And at the hearing when prompted, Mr. Addington estimated his claim to be about 100,000 dollars. And again, we don't have to hold him to it. Your Honor certainly said you would not be holding him to it, but the claim we received was an order of magnitude larger and none of it had to do, really, with -- seemed to have to do with fixing Mr. Addington's property.

So from PG&E's perspective and from the perspective, I would say, of anyone trying to settle this, which I am also of that persuasion, I would also like to see this settled, it just seems like we've been moving backwards on this. And the proof of claim that we have just doesn't give us a whole lot, and it doesn't give us a whole lot from what Mr. Addington had tried to present back in the spring.

And it's not that we're philosophically opposed to -- against discovery or in favor of jamming anybody, it's just that we want to be on a level playing field here where we know where Mr. Addington wants to prove and what the theory is about

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company liability so that we can prepare for discovery, we can determine what, or discuss with Mr. Oliner what the scope of discovery is reasonable and, if possible, take our own discovery from Mr. Addington.

And I do want to --

THE COURT: And that's all fine, but why not share the file then? I mean, Mr. Addington was a tenacious advocate, but Mr. Oliner's presence as an experienced practitioner seems to me a good result from your point of view, and not to take it -- not to criticize Mr. Addington, I don't criticize him. But here we have an experienced lawyer on the other side who says, I'd like to see the file. What's wrong with that?

MR. RUPP: Well, Your Honor, I -- the file is --

THE COURT: I've made a ruling that there was no termination of the easement, and I've made a ruling that there was a settlement in whatever year it was in a certain amount, and after Mr. Addington was paid a certain amount so. Mr. Oliner can't dig himself out of those two positions unless there's some revisiting.

So whether he has a right to assert a claim for 100,000 or 900,000, if he has a right to assert a claim, it seems to me that you start with show me your file. And if there's something in the file that might have been different if there hadn't been these prior rulings, then so be it. But you won those rounds, right? And no one's going back, no one's

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company asking me to set aside the ruling that I made. So I guess I'm having trouble understanding why it's constructive to say we're happy to mediate, but we won't show our file to the other side. So you got to get me past that one first.

MR. RUPP: Your Honor, I guess the way I can get past that is just saying that we're entitled to a little bit more as far as what the theory of liability is here.

THE COURT: Well, but you made a comment in your paper that, I guess, technically I agree with that Rule 12(b) doesn't apply. But Rule 56 applies, and you could file a motion for summary judgment.

If you believe that the amended proof of claim doesn't state a claim, file a summary judgment. Summary judgment is proper on a claim objection. And if you did that and you said there's no liability, blah, blah, blah, Mr. Oliner would say well, I got to get some more facts, give me your file. So you'd show him your file. And then he would, perhaps, oppose the motion for summary judgment, and maybe he'd lose or maybe he'd win. But the point is the issue would be framed.

So you say that we shouldn't give him the file because we want something in return, what do you want in return?

MR. RUPP: I guess, Your Honor, we're -- what we're looking for is the theory of liability here and the specific facts.

THE COURT: But Mr. Rupp, if there's no theory

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company articulated, make a motion for judgment. In other words, if 12(b)(6) isn't available, which is what you would do in a traditional adversary proceeding, you'd say there's no state of claim -- doesn't state a claim under 12(b)(6). And of course, as you know, and most lawyers know, half the 12(b)(6) motions end up being treated like summary judgment motions anyway because people bring in facts.

So one of the facts you would bring in is Mr.

Addington settled this case back in 20-whatever-it-was, and got paid 50,000 bucks. So therefore, he can't complain about what happened in the past.

So all -- and all we're doing now is trying to see has he made a case for any additional damages after that settlement, which was what the underpinning of my ruling was.

And if he -- your argument is he hasn't proven it, then you're going to get a summary judgment.

Anyway -- well, okay. So Mr. Rupp, I won't pin you down any further. Procedurally, what do you want me to do today, because Mr. Oliner wants more time. And I -- this case has taken quite a while, but what would you like me to do?

MR. RUPP: Your Honor, again, we -- we're happy to give more time. We're happy to put this out. We don't -- setting a trial today or any fixed discovery deadlines is, I would say, premature, and I think Mr. Olinger would agree.

25 But --

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 THE COURT: Well, there wasn't -- there was a prior 2 mediation that was unsuccessful. Are you willing to try again? 3 As you know, your firm coordinates a whole panel of other 4 counsel and people available to mediate. If the parties get together and pick someone from that panel and try to resolve 5 6 it, fine. That would seem to be constructive. 7 One of the things that I would wonder is the mediator 8 might say, well, what are the damage claims? But anyway, do 9 you want to explore that? 10 MR. RUPP: Your Honor? 11 THE COURT: Are you prepared to commit and go to that 12 level on the mediation? MR. RUPP: I'm sorry, Your Honor. I didn't quite 13 14 catch that. What -- what level on the mediation? 15 THE COURT: No, I said I -- are you -- is the company 16 willing to do for this case what it's done for many others? 17 Again, you've been on the principal lawyer role in many that 18 have gone to mediation. I can think of over the past couple of 19 years, all the ones that have gone to third-party mediators. 20 And Mr. Oliner, I don't know if you're aware of this, 21 but the company has paid for a mediators from --22 MR. OLINER: I am. 23 THE COURT: -- that it maintains, this is not related 24 to the fire claims, and it's -- but it's ad hoc and it -- some

have been successful and some have not.

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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

And Mr. Rupp, I would assume the company would still
be willing to undermine that -- support that effort, right?.

MR. RUPP: You're -- that's right, Your Honor. I mean, we've enjoyed a lot of success with mediation in other claims. Right now, I'm not sure if mediation would be a good route at this time based on what's been filed so far. I mean, we --

THE COURT: Because the mediator would say why haven't you given them your file?

MR. RUPP: Well, we filed a claim objection, Your

Honor. And just the way the scheduling came out, Mr. Oliner

did want to have this hearing today. But we do think we -
that Mr. Oliner should have to respond to our objection at some

point before we can proceed. If --

THE COURT: Mr. Rupp, that's not a good enough answer. Because the Addington claim was tossed, because it was four million dollars, because Mr. Addington believed that the easement had been terminated. And I said, no, I'm sorry, Mr. Addington, that it hasn't been terminated. But if you had damages that didn't get dealt with because they are post-settlement, prove your claim. And whether Mr. Addington could have filed a claim for 5 dollars or 100,000, he filed a claim for just under a million. And you believe that that claim is -- can't even -- you can't even put your arms around it. But that's the claim he filed.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

And so to tell him to amend the claim, that you won't give them access to the file voluntarily is -- it's silly.

So I could just say, well, let's go to trial, put on your case. And Mr. Oliner would probably ask for discovery and you would have to provide.

So all I'm getting at is, why don't you just say you'll make the file available and take up with your client whether they agree again to support, perhaps, a new mediator on the scene under the same procedure that has worked before, and we'd take another look at it in thirty days or forty-five days? Maybe there'll be progress. Maybe there won't. But I can't -- look, I can't tell Mr. Oliner the other side says you don't have a case, but we'll have a trial, well, you have to prove your case. When he says but I can't prove my case because I can't get access to the files that I'm entitled to under formal discovery. That's not efficient.

MR. OLINER: I don't -- I just want to add that we previously indicated in writing our willingness, in fact, I suggested it, to go to mediation. We will maintain that position provided we receive PG&E's files.

I've conferred with my client about that. If there's something there which increasingly feels like there might be that's useful to us to prosecute the claim, then why -- maybe that's the reticence. But just give us our stuff, because it's far easier for us to see what there is and to go and mediate

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company this in good faith.

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And Mr. Addington is a lot of things. He is tenacious, and he also listens to me. And so I think -- I'm confident that we -- I'm sure we should take a shot at resolving it before I engage in defending SJ and converting it to a long, drawn-out discovery process.

PG&E can try to steamroll us. And they've got the assets, but that's not practical or efficient.

THE COURT: But Mr. Oliner, I have to say --

MR. OLINER: So let's get this to mediation.

THE COURT: Mr. Oliner, I have to say this, though lest I -- lest you make -- think I'm putting Mr. Rupp on the defensive completely. One of the things that struck me as strange is well, why does Mr. Addington need discovery? Mr. Addington settled the case four years ago, and claims to have suffered damages since then and he has to prove it.

So what will he find in PG&E's files that proves his damages? Now, come on, one of his damages is his attorneys' fees. You won't find that in PG&E's file. Another one is his own time, won't find that in there. Another one is the loss of value in his property, won't find that in there. So I'm not sure what in a practical sense you're going to do if you accept that there is a rule in this case that he settled -- he settled four years ago.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company file. I know this, that my client has been warned repeatedly that he has no authority without their approved engineering plan to fix the gradient in his backyard. I don't know what's in the file and Mr. Rupp won't tell me because his client won't let him tell me. So I'm not -- it's not a fishing expedition so much as my trying to get my arms around what my -- what I've got in PG&E's files.

Mr. Addington can't landscape or fix this gradient without figuring out what's -- what PG&E requires. What do they know?

And another further sideshow is a month or so ago, Mr. Addington received an urgent demand for access to his property by PG&E's vendors. Must absolutely happen tomorrow, which was a Sunday, no alternative date. So I contacted Mr. Rupp, and suddenly that urgent need for PG&E to get on the property went away. I don't know what's going on. I just want to see the file, turn over the file, which shouldn't have anything sexy or exciting in it, at least per Mr. Rupp's implication. We will go to mediation and I will drag Mr. Addington there in good faith to try to solve his claim. That's the way we (audio interference).

THE COURT: It seems to me that there's a miscommunication here. Mr. Addington may want to make some corrections on his property, and PG&E may have the right to insist that any such corrections be consistent with its needs,

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company but that has nothing to do with this proof of claim.

In other words, he might want to build a, you know, a tower there as his choice, and maybe he can do it and maybe he can't. But that has to do with the nature of the relationship and the easement. It has nothing to do with his proof of claim in the bankruptcy case.

So I think -- I find this to be a confusion between what Mr. Addington may want to do versus what is the basis for him to have a provable claim against PG&E for any damages that he's suffered from. See the difference?

MR. OLINER: I do, and you may be right, and I'm not going to suggest that you're wrong at the moment. But --

THE COURT: Well, but the point it is if there were no bankruptcy, if there were no dispute here, and Mr. Addington wanted to do something with his property, whether it's rebuild the tennis court or put in a pool or something, whether he could do it or not is -- has nothing to do with the bankruptcy. It has to do with the nature of the relationship between the two tenements, the dominant tenement, PG&E, and the servient one, Addington here. And that's a matter of law and has nothing to do with proofs of claim.

So I think what I'm trying to avoid here is getting into a fight on a contested matter of a claim objection with what Mr. Addington would like to do, even if it's at his expense.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 All he's entitled to do in this bankruptcy case is to 2 prove up money damages that PG&E owes him for the situation 3 that persists after and since his settlement with them. 4 MR. OLINER: Well, I -- your points are again well I don't know what's in the file. It should be very --5 6 this is not rocket science. Give us the file. 7 engineering studies have you done? I'm focusing post-agreement 8 for those purposes. I just got to have the file, and I want to 9 go to mediation, and I will drag Mr. Addington there. I know 10 he's willing to do so. THE COURT: You said that -- you said that before, and 11 12 I accept that. But that's not the point. I mean, I --13 MR. OLINER: Well --14 THE COURT: Listen, the mediation will be a complete 15 failure if Mr. Addington says here I am, I want ten -- a 16 million dollars, and Mr. Rupp's client says we're ready --17 prepared to pay you 10,000 dollars. I mean, that's not going 18 to be successful, you know that. So --19 MR. OLINER: I know that very, very well. 20 THE COURT: Mr. Rupp, it seems to me that -- again, 21 I -- maybe I'm conflating issues and maybe you don't agree with 22 the way I have -- or maybe I should say maybe you are 23 conflating them and I'm separating. But don't you agree that

to the extent that Mr. Addington wants to prove his damage

claim in this bankruptcy, he does have the right to a certain

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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company kind of discovery as a general matter, right?

MR. RUPP: Your Honor, yes. Ultimately, if we -- we're not expecting anyone to put a trial on without taking the discovery they're entitled to.

Again, not to sound like a broken record, but we did state in our claim objection that PG&E has provided an engineering report to Mr. Addington, and it provided the report from the contractor that did the work. But I think more importantly is -- if there's some discovery to be done, I've been to enough hearings before Your Honor and viewed enough hearings before Your Honor that discovery disputes are not Your Honor's pleasure, and you expect competent counsel to work these issues out.

So you know what the -- what keeps troubling me is that we keep using the phrase the file. And you know, it's -- but I understand that's a good enough term for right now. But, perhaps, Mr. Oliner and I can meet and confer and come to some kind of agreement on what exactly Mr. Addington is looking for and what should be turned over.

MR. OLINER: I'm sure --

THE COURT: But if Mr. Addington wants to do something with his property, is it your view that PG&E doesn't have to provide him whatever it would insist upon be done no matter what? Again, even if there were no bankruptcy?

In other words, if there were no bankruptcy and Mr.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Addington calls up PG&E and says I want to install a swimming
pool on my lot, and PG&E may have a way, under the easement
rules, to prohibit him from, or limit his ability to do that.

Is that what we're talking about? Is this a question of a
dispute over what Mr. Addington may want to do wholly apart
from whether he has a proof of claim for damages?

MR. RUPP: You know, again, Your Honor, I think we're

getting a little over our -- over our skis here. I'm not exactly sure what Mr. Addington wants to do to the property.

I'm not a civil engineer. And we don't -- I don't think we have anyone on this call to know what's safe.

What I do know is that these towers are important to PG&E and PG&E has an easement for them and that comes first, that those towers need to remain upright and remain in good condition and Mr. Addington's desires for his lawn comes second.

THE COURT: No, that's true. Again, I don't think there's any -- that's not the issue and that's my point, though.

The only relevance, it seems to me, to any of this, is what -- does Mr. Addington have to prove his claim? And if Mr. Addington threw in the towel and withdrew his proof of claim, that would be the end of this Court and your personal and maybe Mr. Oliner's involvement. But the next day, if Mr. Addington wanted to do something on the property, he'd have to -- he'd

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company have to comply with whatever rules pertain to the servient tenants' rights under the easement. So -- and that's what I'm trying to make sure we don't lose focus on. And I'm asking Mr. Oliner to focus on it too.

What Mr. Addington wants to happen on his property is not the same as what Mr. Addington is entitled to as compensation for a damage claim that he is asserting against PG&E. At least I don't think there -- they overlap. I think they are two separate issues.

I'll tell you what, I will just remind you again, Mr. Rupp, you're correct; I hate discovery disputes. I don't know of a single federal judge who loves -- likes them, but I will put this over one more time, a month or so, and expect as a consensual matter that there'll be an exchange of information.

If Mr. Oliner is frustrated and believes that he should be getting more than you're willing to make available to him, then I guess that will require a more formal motion, because if he wants stuff that is irrelevant to the proof of claim dispute, and he's not going to get it.

But the fact of the matter is, I don't have much choice but to set in motion the claims resolution.

So there's a claim for just under a million dollars that's a hundred percent contested. And Mr. Oliner and his client have the burden of proof, and they have to be put to that proof. But traditional discovery rules say they can have

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company some access to the evidence before they are required to do it.

And PG&E in turn, can file a motion for summary judgment to say on this record, there is no liability for the following reasons, A, B, C. And if PG&E wins that argument, they'll be done with this dispute and -- but in the meantime Mr. Addington and his counsel should at least have access to the information, whatever information is that's relevant to resolving that dispute. And if it's more than that that he wants because of his own desires to do something on the property, because it is his property, no question about that, then to the extent that PG&E's willing to cooperate and do so provide it consensually, it may facilitate a consensual resolution through a mediation process.

So I will assume that PG&E, if it wants to, will make one of the panel mediators available at its expense the way it's done otherwise. And Mr. Addington and his counsel can take advantage of that process. But alternatively, if there's --- if the discovery or the informal discovery becomes unworkable, then I think the burden will be on Mr. Oliner to initiate some formal discovery.

And I'll just put this over -- Mr. Oliner, you say you're going to be away for two weeks?

MR. OLINER: I'm going to be in New York, and Eugene, Oregon for a football game in the next two weeks.

THE COURT: You might consider going to South Bend,

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 Indiana and watch Notre Dame beat Cal next Saturday. In the 2 meantime --3 MR. OLINER: Does Notre Dame --MR. RUPP: Your Honor --4 5 MR. OLINER: -- have a football team? 6 THE COURT: Huh? What, Mr. Rupp? 7 MR. RUPP: Your Honor, you've been hard enough on me 8 already today. I think that was undeserved. 9 THE COURT: I get it. 10 MR. OLINER: Your Honor, the -- that's terrific. 11 think your comments are quiding us. Mr. Rupp and I have a good 12 rapport. I'm a little mad at his client, but that's just how I 13 am. 14 I will proceed in good faith in the effort to get what 15 we've called the file, and Mr. Rupp correctly calls it his 16 stuff that's relevant to the claim and try to resolve it that 17 way. 18 I don't intend to proceed with formal discovery before 19 this to-be-set-next hearing. But if we can't get what we need 20 and we're still fighting about basics there, that's what I'm 21 going to be talking about at the next hearing. 22 THE COURT: Yeah, but the point is, if you're going to 23 be out of town for a good part of two weeks, then I want you to 24 be productively back on duty here to deal with these matters --

MR. OLINER: Yes.

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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 THE COURT: -- and so I don't want to have a hearing 2 two days after your schedule lets you back. 3 So Ms. Parada, what are our -- what's our PG&E date out about a month? Mr. Rupp probably knows the dates, but I 4 5 don't know. 6 MR. RUPP: I believe it's the 11th, Your Honor. 7 THE CLERK: Yes. That's the only date available in 8 October. 9 THE COURT: What's the next one after that? 10 THE CLERK: That would be sometime in November. November 2nd, 15th, and 30th. 11 12 THE COURT: Mr. Oliner, November --13 MR. OLINER: November 2 is fine, Your Honor. 14 already in court on the 11th in another case. So November 2 15 would be terrific. And that's plenty of time for Mr. Rupp and 16 I to try to get -- be on the same page. 17 THE COURT: Okay. But gentlemen, on November 2nd, if 18 there hasn't been a resolution or either a resolution as to the 19 procedure, like scheduling a mediation or scheduling some

discovery, I'm going to set a schedule for either trial on the contested claim or any motion that Mr. Rupp or either side wants to make that might be dispositive.

And we won't call it a 12(b)(6) motion, because it isn't. It could be a summary judgment motion. But I'll wish you good luck in trying to make some progress.

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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 So I'm continuing the Addington claim objection to 2 November 2nd at 10 o'clock and I'm not going to fix any 3 deadlines. I'll assume that you'll file some sort of a joint 4 status conference before that, but I'm not going to fix 5 anything that's required. Okay? 6 MR. RUPP: We will. 7 MR. OLINER: Thank you very much for your time today, 8 Your Honor. 9 MR. RUPP: Thank you, Your Honor. 10 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Oliner. 11 MR. RUPP: Before we quit, I did want to repay the 12 compliment from Mr. Oliner earlier and thank him for agreeing 13 to the extension and for his professionalism. 14 THE COURT: Yeah. Okay, great. And are you staying 15 on for the next matter, Mr. Rupp, or is that someone else? 16 MR. RUPP: I will retire to the gallery, Your Honor, 17 but --18 THE COURT: Okay. 19 MR. RUPP: -- some of my co-counsel may be listening 20 in as well and may wish to be heard. 21 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you very much. 22 MR. RUPP: Thank you. 23 THE COURT: We'll proceed with Mr. Abrams' matter. 24 All right. Good morning, Mr. Abrams. Please state 25 your appearance, please.

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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
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              MR. ABRAMS: Good morning, Your Honor. Will Abrams.
 2
              THE COURT: Ms. Parada, who is appearing for the Fire
 3
     Trustee today?
 4
              THE CLERK: Mr. Molton is joining now, Your Honor. He
 5
     raised a hand.
 6
              THE COURT: Okay. Is Mr. -- Ms. Parada, is there
 7
     anyone else who has asked to be heard on this matter today?
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              THE CLERK: Mr. Matthew French has raised a hand.
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     Would you like me to bring him in, Your Honor?
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              THE COURT:
                          I'm sorry. What's the person's name?
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              THE CLERK: Matthew French.
12
              THE COURT: Yes. Okay.
              All right. Mr. Molton, would you state your
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14
     appearance, please? Mr. Molton, are you there? I can't hear
15
     you. Nope, still can't hear you.
16
              Mr. French, do you wish to be heard?
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              MR. FRENCH: Sure, Your Honor. Matthew French for
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     creditors Majesti Mai Bagorio, et al. I joined Mr. Abrams'
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     motion.
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              THE COURT: Oh, okay. Thank you, Mr. French.
21
              Mr. Molton, until I can hear you, I can't do much.
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              Ms. Parada, you can't hear him, can you?
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              THE CLERK: I cannot, Your Honor.
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              THE COURT: Mr. Molton, I -- you got a -- you've got
25
     some sort of a muting thing on your microphone. You want to
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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company log out and come back in again? All right. Go ahead and do that. We'll just wait.

(Pause.)

MR. MOLTON: Can you hear me now, Your Honor?

5 THE COURT: There you go. Good morning, Mr. Molton.

MR. MOLTON: I'm so sorry, Judge. I had to get off of another machine and onto my Apple. So I don't want to give them a another thumbs up, but they always seem to work.

THE COURT: Okay. Just state your appearance for the record.

MR. MOLTON: Your Honor, David Molton, Brown Rudnick LLP, for the Fire Victim Trust and the Fire Victim Trustee Cathy Yanni, in that capacity.

THE COURT: So when Mr. Abrams filed this motion, his prior motion that was directed more specifically to Justice Trotter and the Fire Trust, I set a preliminary hearing and didn't ask for a response from you. When I looked at this motion, which we'll call his JAMS motion, for lack of a better term, it was much broader in scope, and I frankly wasn't quite clear whether and who would be respondents on the motion. So I, simply adopted the same procedure to kind of let's find out if people want to be heard on this.

Well, I did expect the Fire Trustee as their counsel now has appeared, and I -- and to some extent, that's what I wanted too. And now I've come to realize that it's not even

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company clear who might be respondents on this motion.

And I don't want to turn this into a debate with Mr.

Abrams, and I want to say that one of the things that I need to
do is to figure out who are the likely respondents on this

motion and what did they want to say.

So Mr. Molton, what I'd like to ask you if you have any indication or clue other than your client, Ms. Yanni -- and I don't know whether you're going to be acting on behalf of Justice Trotter also -- but are you aware of people or parties other than you and your client who are going to want to be opposing this or heard on this motion?

MR. MOLTON: Judge, I had some remarks, and I was going to go into that very point because, as Your Honor knows from reading Mr. Abrams' motion, most of it is directed to matters that preceded the Trust or other cases that have nothing to do with the Trust.

He mentions a lot of names in there, Your Honor, including in addition to former trustee and former Justice

Trotter and Cathy Yanni, our present trustee, he mentions Mr.

Skikos, a member of the TOC. He mentions Judge Newsome, who is a court-appointed mediator in this case. Jay Gandhi, another mediator in this case. Both of their mediations that Mr.

Abrams referred to, of course, concern issues that preceded the Trust.

He mentions a number of people that I don't know of,

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company but arguably, according to Mr. Abrams, are JAMS panelists: retired Judge Carvill, retired Judge Gallagher, Ms. Gillette, retired Judge Kawaichi, Judge Pichon, Viggo Boserup who is the appeals officer for -- in our appeals regime under our claims procedure, and JAMS in full.

And one of the things, Your Honor, I was going to ask is it's our feeling, Your Honor, that based on the fact that we don't believe there's any good cause to proceed for various reasons, including the fact that all we have are allegations and innuendo based on newspaper articles and whatnot, and I can go into some remarks on that as well. But at the very least, Your Honor, notice and opportunity to be heard should be given to anyone impacted by Mr. Abrams' request for discovery.

Mr. Abrams, as Your Honor would know in his papers, even defines this request as a very broad request. And if Your Honor looks at his proposed discovery, which includes lots of interrogatories and document requests that go well beyond the people I represent or the entities I represent, I think it only fair, Your Honor, that this Court give those folks notice and opportunity.

I do note, Your Honor, that in doing what you did, which is exactly what you did the prior time, you asked for us to come forward, meaning the Trust, and be prepared to indicate how and when it, us, the Trust intends to respond or otherwise deal with the motion. And for folks who may be mentioned in

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Mr. Abrams' pleadings, we're reading Your Honor's directive, I
don't think that gave them clear indication that they were
expected either to be here today or to have anything on the
record. Indeed, Your Honor in Your Honor's order, asks us not
to file anything, which we didn't.

So my view, Judge, is that at the very least, clearly that those folk who are mentioned or impacted by Mr. Abrams' requests be given an opportunity to come in.

I don't know, Judge, and I can't tell you right now whether they will or won't, but certainly they weren't expected to, based on the pleadings to date, and they should be given that opportunity. So I hope that answers your question.

THE COURT: Well, no, it does. Can you clarify whether you speak today for Justice Trotter also or --

MR. MOLTON: No, Judge. I -- one of the things that I wanted to say in my opening remark is I'm here for the Fire Victim Trustee, Cathy Yanni in her capacity as such, as well as for the Fire Victim Trust.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. MOLTON: The allegations that have been made against Justice Trotter, which were derived, I understand, from a Los Angeles Times article, concern events and issues that precede the Trust. So at the present time, I am not here for him with respect to those issues.

25 THE COURT: Okay. But I'm not surprised at your

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company response, but at least that focuses the question at the minimum Justice Trotter, personally, or in his former capacity, may be considered a respondent, and he hasn't been noticed. And Ms. Yanni, of course, in her capacity as the current trustee and her counsel on that trust are. And it seems to me that all the other people that you've identified -- and I believe there's at least one other person you didn't mention who was a former judge who was actually appointed, I believe that's Judge James --

MR. MOLTON: Yes, I forgot Judge James.

THE COURT: -- I actually issued an order during the case to authorize her role, as I did with Judge Newsom. But whether either of those or any other person should even be a respondent is one of the uncertainties in my mind about this motion. And I, as I say, I didn't insist that they be respond -- served or response, and I didn't know whether they would respond or not. And my instincts told me maybe someone would be responding by saying, I oppose this.

When I saw Mr. French's name, I didn't recognize his name, and I thought, well, there is at least one lawyer who might be here for one of the respondents. Obviously, Mr. French, who stated his appearance, is not in that camp. He's in the roll call in the Abrams' camp, I'm sure. And Mr. French, I'll give you a chance to speak in a moment.

I'm just saying that unlike the original, what I'll

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company call the original Abrams' discovery motion, where there was a very clear focus on who the respondent would be, I nevertheless saw fit to depart from the normal process in Rule 2004.

I mean, 2004 is, to the extent that they -- that rule is available and we don't have to go there again, I've made a decision previously about that. And there's a whole -- there's a whole body of practice in our court in this district on how 2004 requests are processed. But there's never been a case of this nature where Mr. Abrams in his role as -- whatever his role is, is bringing something that is broader than in my experience, has ever been dealt with before.

So -- but Mr. Molton, before I conclude my comments to you, I still believe it's appropriate for you to file a formal response, and I want to move this more quickly than I, perhaps, did in the other time -- the other motion. So make me a proposal. I assume you can respond within a reasonably short period of time.

MR. MOLTON: Judge, I was ready for that, Your Honor, and I've got a date to suggest. And that date, Your Honor, is October 3rd. And that's a date also, as Your Honor may recall, that is the disclosure date of the director and officer --

THE COURT: Right.

MR. MOLTON: -- settlement agreement that was the subject of the joint motion by PG&E and the Fire Victim Trust.

THE COURT: Well, yes. And you did say that's coming.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
And so that's still on track. And just as an aside, is that
going to be noticed out, or is it going to be on a scream or
die? What will be the mechanism to bring that before the
Court?

MR. MOLTON: Judge, I'm going to have to look at Your Honor's order today for that application. I think we -- I think that the -- that is the date by which the settlement will be disclosed. And I think PG&E -- and I don't know if they're in the room or listening, but I think that they need to be moving the Court with respect to certain aspects of that settlement agreement or issues related to. And --

THE COURT: And I'm assuming --

MR. MOLTON: Yes.

THE COURT: -- yes, Mr. Molton, I'm assuming that that it's a complex settlement that involves the district court litigation, the state court litigation by the trustee, the class plaintiffs, the debtor, the Fire Trustee, and lots of other folks. And I don't -- and Mr. Abrams or any other party in the case, whether a fire claimant or a nonfire claimant, might want to be heard. I don't think that the approval and the consummation of that settlement should be at all involved with the current discovery requests that are done here. And just a coincidence that you're proposing a date that coincides with --

MR. MOLTON: Yes.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

THE COURT: -- that date. But beyond that's the

only --

MR. MOLTON: There's no interconnection. And I'm not asking you to make any, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. MOLTON: We're just using that as a useful date for getting a response in here, allowing, as I suggested, after proper notice, other interested parties should they want to, to file a response as well as on a very -- on a separate matter, wholly independent of this, there will be other activity as well.

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, I'm inclined to give the Fire Trustee, Mr. Molton, for his client, the Trust and the current trustee, a date of October 3rd to respond. And as to all these other people, from Justice Trotter to JAMS as an institution, to the individuals, there's nothing procedurally on the line.

You haven't even demonstrated any kind of formal notice to those parties. And I'm not inclined to do anything except decide on your motion and the trustee's response what to do next.

Now, what to do next might be a reply from you. It might be a hearing. It might be an order to give notice to others. I simply want to see what happens on October 3rd, and that's what I'm inclined to do, and I'll give you a chance to respond. But my inclination is to let Mr. Molton have a

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company response date. Whether it should have been a little later or a little earlier, it's not a big deal, it's not very long from now, and take the matter under advisement and decide what to do then. So go ahead and respond if you wish to.

MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Your Honor.

Certainly, I agree with what Your Honor stated and what Mr. Molton reiterated that getting this done sooner rather than later is very important, certainly very important to victims. And I just wanted to make sure that the Court understood that I did follow as best as I could, the procedures and noticed everyone on the service list who was --

THE COURT: Did you serve any of them? Did you serve any of them by original service?

MR. ABRAMS: I served all of them via email.

THE COURT: I asked you if you served any of them by original service. I guess the answer is no.

MR. ABRAMS: The answer is no, Your Honor, and I -- and look, Your Honor knows that I am not a practicing attorney, and I'm following the procedures as best I can. If the Court is correcting me, I stand corrected and I will certainly provide written notice via certified mail to whomever I should be providing that to.

I think it is a correct point that because of the pattern associated with JAMS and Justice Trotter that's been demonstrated, of course the parties who are associated with

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
that are broader than they might have been. But that is not a
function of me putting forward a motion. That's a function of
the pattern that's been demonstrated that is before the Court.

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams?

MR. ABRAMS: For me as a messenger --

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams? Mr. Abrams, excuse me. What you call a pattern that has been demonstrated, I call a newspaper report with no foundation. So you may assume that all those other judges, and that JAMS itself as an entity and Justice Trotter and Ms. Yanni have all done bad things, but I make no determination and no pattern has been established except your reporting of what the LA Times reported about a major catastrophe and scandal in another unrelated bankruptcy.

MR. ABRAMS: Understood, Your Honor. And look -THE COURT: It's that simple.

MR. ABRAMS: And look, Your Honor, and I made it very clear in my motion that I am not accusing anyone of a crime.

But the basis here, as I read it, is good cause. And I'm certainly not reliant upon any outside reporting. I'm demonstrating a pattern that says, yes, there's good cause.

Your Honor, if this was -- in a lot of ways, the way that I see the role of the trustee is for providing security for the Trust, making sure that the Trust has integrity.

And so if there was an example of a bank that -- that somebody had security over that bank, and it turned out that

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company some other parties were taking money from that bank, and then there was a pattern of money being taken out of banks, and then we're in charge of -- and then is in charge of a new bank for 13.5 billion dollars, and all the money isn't there, there would, of course, be good cause for asking questions about are they taking prudent steps for security of that bank?

And so similarly, I certainly feel that there is good cause in this case to be asking is the current and past trustee and JAMS in general providing security for the Trust, or have they been operating in ways that are not in good faith? And I think that that's just good cause.

I'm not -- again, I am not accusing anyone of a crime.

I'm not reliant on the press. I am providing information to

the Court that wasn't before the Court before to demonstrate

good cause for reasonable discovery.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. French, do you wish to be heard?

MR. FRENCH: Morning, Your Honor.

Fundamentally, I agree with Mr. Abrams as to good cause. I think that this reported pattern of behavior is sufficient.

THE COURT: But what you see as a pattern of behavior?

MR. FRENCH: Well --

24 THE COURT: Let's assume the Girardi case is a major 25 disaster for lots of people in the Girardi world. PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

1 MR. FRENCH: Certainly.

THE COURT: So where is there a pattern beyond that?

3 MR. FRENCH: Well, the article does not implicate

Justice Trotter to be clear and neither am I. But it does indicate that he was trustee of two different bankruptcy trusts from which Mr. Girardi misappropriated funds. And to my mind that is sufficient good cause to just make sure that we don't

THE COURT: Okay.

have any of the same issues here.

MR. FRENCH: I agree with Your Honor that the breadth of the motion is perhaps not as narrow as is necessary to answer that question. To my mind, though, in terms of notice, which I agree there's a problem with notice, is that the first step would be the Trust sort of making an accounting for who has a contractual relationship with the Trust that's related to JAMS or what contracts exist between the Trust and JAMS, and that that would be a starting point, in which case the notice could be issued and we could sort of set the parameters for, perhaps, different categories of people as to what would be discoverable or not.

THE COURT: Well, I can ask Mr. Molton if there is any contract between the Trust and JAMS, and he probably could answer that in one syllable, yes or no, probably. And I'm not going to ask him that now unless he wants to volunteer it. But I mean, the pattern, what if he says no, first of all, and

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company let's assume that Mr. Molton isn't going to make it up, isn't that the end of the inquiry? I mean, what's the next step if on a final formal basis I ask Mr. Molton does the Trust have a contract with JAMS and he says no. Then what? What's the next question?

MR. FRENCH: Disclosure of prior relationships among Trust employees with JAMS.

THE COURT: I mean, like what, for example? Somebody that's a data processor who used to work as a clerk at JAMS? I mean, if you want me to know if there's any member of the --well, first of all, there is only one trustee. The fact that Ms. Yanni may have done work through JAMS sometime in the past, I don't know what the relationship of any JAMS entity is. I'm assuming, but I don't know this personally, that they're independent contractors. I mean, it's my experience with real estate brokers and, perhaps, I think mediators elsewhere, I believe generally they are independent contractors.

So if I'm an independent contractor, or if you, Mr. French, are -- if you go do a gig through JAMS and you're an independent contractor, does that mean, therefore, JAMS is implicated in any mischief that you might be involved with? Again, I'm going to assume the answer is, of course, it doesn't. The question is what to do about it in the context of a 2004 exam.

I'll accept Mr. Abrams' goal here is to -- and you're

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company sharing this notion of good cause. I'm still going to do it in little steps.

Mr. Abrams, I'm not directing, in fact, I do not expect you to go out and serve a bunch of entities or former judges or retired judges or anyone else with something in the next couple weeks. I'm going to let Mr. Molton file a response by the date he said, and then I'm going to decide what to do. And I may decide that, perhaps, Justice Trotter should be expected to respond as the former trustee. But that doesn't mean that I'm going to say, therefore, JAMS as an entity -- again, what does it mean to say JAMS as a corporate entity if some other person or retired judge or a lawyer has had a relationship with JAMS? Does that implicate JAMS or not?

This is Mr. Abrams trying to protect his interest as a claimant in this bankruptcy case. It is not the chief justice of the California Supreme Court deciding that the legislature ought to fix the world of private judging. It is deciding whether the interests of the Fire Victims Trust, which is the goal of this proceeding, are in any kind of jeopardy or need to be dug into more thoroughly than has happened so far.

And I'm not prepared at this point to make a decision on it, but I'm just raising the question is that -- well, let me say this.

Mr. Molton, I believe it would be appropriate when you file your response to at least answer that question through Ms.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Yanni, and I do think it's appropriate for you at least to, in
your written response, to indicate -- well, I'm going to
assume -- I assume that your response will not be on behalf of
Justice Trotter personally or as a former trustee, and that
until he's directed to respond -- and I won't expect him to -but the fact is, I might give you a heads-up. I might be
inclined to ask Justice Trotter or direct Justice Trotter to
respond that I think it is only Justice Trotter because he is
the only prior trustee in this trust. We have a prior trustee
and an existing trustee, and the existing trustee is
represented in her capacity as trustee through counsel.

And I would say, Mr. Molton, if Justice Trotter or any counsel for him were inclined to file a response by the same deadline, that might be constructive, but I'm not going to order it at this point. I'll just leave it as an open question.

So I'm going to expect a response by the Fire Victim

Trustee through Mr. Molton by October 3rd, and the matter is

going to stand submitted at that point. If I want further

briefing from Mr. Abrams or from anyone else, I will so advise

the parties after I've considered the response.

Any questions, Mr. Abrams?

MR. ABRAMS: Yes, Your Honor. I did have one question.

I had three other points of order that I was hoping to

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company bring before the Court. The first just a clarification, Your Honor. What is clear is that these representatives of JAMS are also shareholders.

THE COURT: No, it's not clear. That's not clear to me. If it's clear to you, provide some competent evidence that it's true.

MR. ABRAMS: So the competent evidence is that from Justice Trotter's own mouth, he said he's still a shareholder in JAMS.

THE COURT: Okay. That's one person.

MR. ABRAMS: But again, it's --

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, that's one person. You haven't named anyone else who's a shareholder.

MR. ABRAMS: Absolutely. Which is why I think it's good cause and certainly appropriate to ask if Justice Trotter is a shareholder, wouldn't the chairman of the board, Mr. -- who's now the appeals coordinator, also be a shareholder?

THE COURT: Okay. That's a fair question.

MR. ABRAMS: Who's the others? And so it's just good cause to ask the question. If it turns out and they say, no, we're not shareholders, then I agree with Your Honor. If they say we are shareholders, then of course, the question is to what degree are they acting as shareholders to try to increase the corporation's assets, and to what degree are they acting on behalf of victims and other parties that they represent within

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company the case?

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, that's a fair point, and I believe if Mr. Trot -- Justice Trotter has -- and I think you have quoted as his saying, he is a shareholder, and at that point, I'll take that as in the record somewhere, and I've already asked that Justice Trotter be prepared to respond, if he is so inclined, and if not, I may choose to direct that he do so. I'm not going to require that of anyone else at this point.

MR. ABRAMS: I --

THE COURT: Again, I'm -- Mr. Abrams, so you understand, to me, it's fair game perhaps to ask of conduct of the trustee when he was the trustee and therefore prior -- therefore, he, as the prior trustee -- all these other people, I have no evidence at this point about it, and I'm not going to turn this into an evidentiary point at this point.

What's the second question you -- you had three points of order.

MR. ABRAMS: Sure. The second point, Your Honor, is that I appreciate that we're trying to put this, perhaps, on a faster track to get things filed, but I just wanted to understand because what's been happening recently regarding the motions for discovery is that there's been a very fast expectation from the trustee that their motions to be quickly decided upon and then fast tracked, and then when a motion is

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put forward on discovery for me, that that is then provided a
very long time, and it seems that, perhaps, that's an effort of
the trustee, and perhaps, now the debtor to be able to push
this off as long as possible so that none of this information
comes out and impacts the case.

So I just ask in future -- maybe some of this is because I'm unaware as a pro se claimant, but that they put -- that the trustee puts a response deadline so that myself or other victims or other parties that would want to respond and weigh in to provide the Court with more context have the opportunity to do so. So that's my --

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, I'm the one that makes the rules on these deadlines. I gave you an opportunity to respond to your first motion. I did not -- and to the extent that you are upset that I didn't give you a response on the motions to seal, that was my decision. It was not the trustee's secret plan to cut you off, or the debtor's.

I know you believe, perhaps, the right to respond is a denial of due process. I don't believe that's true. Lots of courts around this land don't even give moving parties time to respond. Our district generally does, but there is no Constitutional right to a hearing or to even a response at this point. So to the extent that you feel wronged that certain things like decisions on sealing were decided quickly, blame me. Don't blame Mr. Molton or the trustee, and if I believe

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company it's necessary to give you an opportunity to respond to what Mr. Molton files, I will do so, and if I disagree, then you can blame me if I don't give you that opportunity.

MR. ABRAMS: I appreciate it, Your Honor. It's not about blame. I just wanted to make that point, but I appreciate Your Honor's context, and I certainly appreciate that and will follow it.

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams --

MR. ABRAMS: I just --

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, you're very verbose and prolix, and you articulate and express yourself extremely well, and as the old saying, if you can't say it in your opening brief, you don't say it. So your briefs are thorough, and it doesn't follow that you therefore must therefore reply to everything. One of the things that drives me crazy about lawyers is they say the same thing in their reply that they said in their opening brief. If you did that, I'd run out of paper.

MR. ABRAMS: Understood. And that's not my goal, and believe me, as individual, I certainly want to cut down on my workload, not add to it, but again, it's just in contrast to the larger length of time that's given, but I understood. I take Your Honor's point.

I did have, again, two other just minor points that I wanted to make sure I brought up. One, Your Honor, is that I

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company just want to make clear because what's been happening is with the last preliminary hearing was that there was a preliminary hearing where it was stated that I do not have the opportunity to argue my case in the preliminary hearing, which I understand, but then after the preliminary hearing, it was stated by both Mr. Molton and within the Court order that I was given the opportunity to argue my case, which I wasn't, and I just want to make sure that I understand -- and this is for my own understanding, Your Honor, that I understand that this is a preliminary hearing, not to argue my case and that Your Honor will decide if I'm given an opportunity to argue my case, but I just don't want to have it be the case where I'm given a preliminary hearing where I can't argue my case, and then later parties are able to state, well, I had my preliminary hearing, and I was able to argue fully my case, which is -- which isn't (indiscernible) --

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THE COURT: We're getting hung up on labels. You made a motion. I chose to have a preliminary hearing. I could have simply directed Mr. Molton to respond and then decide it. I chose because of the history, frankly, the history of your earlier motion, but now with the incredible breadth of this motion, I didn't want to have JAMS or Judges X, Y, and Z and all the other people you named feel that they had to do something under a procedure that is almost unprecedented. You have decided to file a thing called your 2004 motion and name

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company all these people who have nothing to do with the Court in a technical sense, in a sense of active parties and didn't even serve them correctly.

So I was not about to start to put out rules that says, Judge So and So, whether it be Judge Newsome or Judge James or Judge -- any one of the other people that Mr. Molton named have to respond because I don't know that they have to respond. So I made the rules because of the unusual procedure that you took. And Mr. Abrams, that goes to the very heart of it, whether there's even proper to be using Rule 2004 in this context the way you have tried -- wished to do it on what we'll call the JAMS motion, much different, in my opinion, from the prior motion that was focused and directed or at least in the way that I dealt with it with the fire trustee. So --

MR. ABRAMS: I'm just -- Your Honor, I just --

THE COURT: I will leave it with that. Go ahead with your final point. You had one more point.

MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Your Honor. I just, the last point, Your Honor, is that I want to make sure that it is -- and that I'm following this correctly, is that there was a protective order that was modified by the trustee, and that's docket 8662, and within that, they really have, in addition to their exculpations and other protections that they negotiated, have a protective order to make sure that any discovery that comes out cannot be used, and I certainly would look for a

 ${\tt PG\&E}$  Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company modification to that.

Certainly, I've stated and I believe and I hope that there's nothing here that reveals bad-faith actions, but if there are things that come out that do reveal bad-faith actions, I don't want to have a prior negotiated protective order precluding remedies that the Court may want to take or other courts may want to take, and so I would just ask that the Court consider a modification to that order and to whatever degree I need to research that and figure out how to do it, I will, but I just wanted to bring that point up as well.

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, as you know, there are, what, 13,000 items on this docket and counting, and I don't remember docket number 8662, but if it was a protective order that was entered some time in the past, I'm not about to do anything about that order until the proponents of that order and people impacted by that order are given an opportunity to be heard on the subject of it.

So the answer is if there's a protective order in place, it's in place, and if somebody believes there should be some relief from it, they should — they need to make a proper motion and deal with it. Again, I don't even want to go there today because that raises all sorts of post-confirmation jurisdiction. I have no clue of the merits of what you refer to. I made a note in my pad here that it's 8662, but that's all I know about it, and it's not an action item today.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

We're back to the point when I get Mr. Molton's filing, I will review it and decide what to do next. If I decide to give you some relief as requested, perhaps, the next step will be, well, what happens after that? If I don't give you the relief you want, then it may be academic at least, unless my decision is vacated at some point going forward. So it's just premature for me even to speculate. You've made it -- you've preserved it. You've preserved your position on it, and it's noted.

MR. ABRAMS: And Your Honor, last point -- and I promise it's my last point. Just the one thing I also did just want to state that's clear is that the individuals that I -- that are contracted with or employed by JAMS are holding very central roles within this case, and so I'm not going beyond the case when I'm listing those individuals. Unfortunately, there's a long list of those peoples, all from JAMS. That isn't my doing. That is just a fact associated with this case, and my purpose of providing a context of the prior case with Ms. Yanni and where Mr. Skikos was involved was to be able to demonstrate when one corporation has an inordinate role behind closed doors with confidentiality agreements. And as we've seen in the Girardi case, unfortunately that creates an environment where bad things can happen.

And so it was to provide that context and to really try to list those things, and within the redacted agreements

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 that were filed with the Court, I should also note that 2 completely redacted from that are who's doing the mediation. So we don't even know even beyond this if there are other 3 4 mediators that are core to this case who are from JAMS, Inc. --5 Wait. What are you referring to? What THE COURT: 6 mediator is being -- I mean, what document redacts out who was 7 a mediator? 8 MR. ABRAMS: So in the derivative cases, Your Honor, 9 where they provided the agreements around the derivative cases, 10 there's a section called --11 THE COURT: You mean, in the retention agreements. 12 MR. ABRAMS: In the retention agreements. I'm sorry, 13 Your Honor, yes. There is a whole section about mediation, and 14 all of that is redacted. Only the title of that section is 15 kept in. So again, I don't know what's behind the black marks. 16 I don't -- and again, it's just demonstrating that JAMS, Inc., 17 has had an inordinate role within this case, and given the 18 patterns that were identified within my motion --19 THE COURT: But how do you know --20 MR. ABRAMS: -- that's what I'm relying on. 21 THE COURT: How do you know that JAMS, Inc., is in the 22 redacted language? 23 MR. ABRAMS: Like I said, Your Honor, I don't know, 24 but we know that JAMS, Inc., is covering I think it was close 25 to twenty-five other key points within this case, and so --

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1 THE COURT: But your pending --

2 MR. ABRAMS: -- it's not out of the ordinary --

3 THE COURT: Mr. Abrams?

4 MR. ABRAMS: Yeah.

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THE COURT: First of all, I reviewed the unredacted documents. So you can, again, blame it on me because I did, I reviewed every word of every redacted document, and I made a decision that they would stay redacted, and so that's one thing.

Secondly, you paint with a very broad brush, and I am not prepared on your say-so to paint or taint -- paint or taint, pick your word, JAMS or anyone else with the sins of Mr. Girardi and what has come out in that case. Simply not -- we're not going there, and that is -- I agree with you if somehow this Fire Victim Trust, or through any of its representatives, has been tainted by misconduct, then there are consequences, perhaps. I agree with you. But I'm not about to say, Mr. Girardi and all of his failures, his personal, disastrous occasion for so many people, is not going to be imported and infused into this case because somehow Justice Trotter, who was selected in this case was also involved in some matter that involved Mr. Girardi, that the LA Times wants to make -- draw inferences about. I am not drawing inferences about it.

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company

1 THE COURT: Okay. Well you're --

2 MR. ABRAMS: I'm just --

THE COURT: You're painting a picture that I haven't painted, but I'm going to leave it at that. You've made your comments and I've noted it and I will do this in the steps that I agreed to with you and assured you that I'm going to go there.

Mr. French, did you have a final comment?

MR. FRENCH: I just wanted to clarify my position. So my thought was that the names, aside from Justice Trotter's, in the motion were examples of some of the issues with JAMS. I was not imagining necessarily doing some investigation on each of those individuals. My thought was to have the Trust report back what its relationships are with JAMS or people who have these relationships with JAMS. So just so that we understand where those connections are, so that then, if there's a need for further analysis based upon that, that we have the information necessary to go forward.

THE COURT: Mr. --

20 MR. FRENCH: Just understanding those relationships

21 is --

THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Molton, to the extent that you're able and in a position to clarify the trust's role, that would be helpful. I'll just leave it to you to make what you believe is an appropriate disclosure. At this point, I'm not

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company going to order it. Justice Trotter has been quoted as saying he is or was a shareholder. To the extent that he is or was, it might be helpful, and if Ms. Yanni, I know had some prior, if not current, affiliation with JAMS, but she can certainly make a disclosure and should make a disclosure in this context for her as the Fire Victim Trustee, but I'll leave it at that at this point.

MR. MOLTON: Judge, instead of speaking off the cuff, what I'd like to do is save those for our response so we're completely accurate, but if I might, I'd like to just say a few things in closing, if I might, Your Honor?

THE COURT: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

MR. MOLTON: I want to reiterate because I think it's important because a lot of things have been said that aren't based on evidence or proof or even credible allegations.

There's not a single allegation in the papers submitted that anything wrong has actually occurred at the Trust or in connection with the Trust.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. MOLTON: As Your Honor knows, every April, we file an audited financial statement with an opinion from an auditor, BDO, once a year, which sets forth the trust finances and claims history for that year.

Number 2, what we have here -- one example, and we'll deal with this more -- Mr. Abrams likes to take what he reads

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company in the newspaper and put it in a fashion that can be used here. He cites the LA Times, and he basically misquotes that article in his pleading, page 2 of 39 at 12766, he says that discovery request should be expanded "to ensure that the multifaceted victimization of injured people referred to by the chief justice" -- and I'm going to butcher her name. So I'm not going to say it, but her name is there -- "regarding the influence of JAMS has not undermined the well-intentioned efforts of this court to ensure fair and just outcomes." The actual quote, Your Honor, the actual quote from that paper was from the chief judge in the article cited by Mr. Abrams has nothing to do with JAMS or anyone involved with the Fire Victim Trust. It says, the chief justice lamented the multifaceted victimization of injured people in the Girardi case. So that's what we're dealing with here, Judge. We're dealing with all of these innuendos, and arguably, misstatements.

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Number two, Judge -- so there's no evidence or allegation of wrongdoing at the Trust. Number two -- and you know, we'll deal with this in our response, but I think it's a good example, Mr. Abrams cites to Mr. Boserup, who is the appeals officer, what does an appeal officer do? Well, if you read our constitutional documents, the appeal officer reviews and assigns an appeal to either a complex or noncomplex panel. That's it. Not involved in claims administration. Then, there's a random of neutrals, of a neutral, as a result of that

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company categorization either to the complex or noncomplex panel. And many of what Mr. Abrams refers to as the panel of neutrals refers to appeals.

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I want to give Your Honor -- because we're very proud of the work we do, and will put it in our pleading -- Judge, we've had 36,000 submitted claims questionnaires to date. 36,000. We've had -- eighty percent of those have had determination notices. I know that Justice Trotter, when he was trustee, and Ms. Yanni now, is fully engaged in pushing that number up by year-end as well. It's important to note that of that eighty percent of the 36,000, less than two-thirds of a percent -- I'm going to say that again. Two-thirds of a percent or .67 percent have invoked an appeal. 99.33 percent of all determinations notices have been resolved without appeal. That means -- and I'm going to cut more to the chase -- that's 155 appeals, Judge, that have gone to the JAMS neutrals in any event. So that's a little bit of what we're having to deal with in terms of broad allegations that have nothing to do with the facts.

Judge, with respect to the protective order, I agree. I don't know what Mr. Abrams is referring to. We'll take a look at it. The low number of it suggests to me that it might even precede the existence of the Trust, the low docket entry number, but we'll take a look at it. And again, I want to reiterate, Your Honor, that we're looking forward to

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company responding, and we'll respond in-kind and address the issues that Your Honor suggested we do so.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. ABRAMS: Your Honor, there was a few allegations there that I just would like to be able to have respond to that Mr. Molton put forward.

THE COURT: Go ahead.

MR. ABRAMS: So first of all, Mr. Molton's characterization that there was an audit done so that's all the financial reporting we need to do, I think is very disingenuous. The fact of the matter is that my prior motion stated that it is very important for victims to understand the costs that are being incurred by the Trust, the financial incentive structures, all of which were redacted. I'm not blaming anyone, but then to say, look, you know, we've fully disclosed all the financial information that we need to, I think is inappropriate.

The second point, Your Honor, is that Mr. Molton listed a number of different folks that he feels should have nothing to do with this, including the appeals officer and the people that are sitting on this complex or simple panel for appeals. Every single one of them comes from JAMS, Inc.

THE COURT: How do you know that? How do you know that?

MR. ABRAMS: Because I looked at --

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 THE COURT: How do you know that? First of all, what 2 does come from mean? 3 MR. ABRAMS: That they are employed by or contracted with JAMS, Inc. --4 5 THE COURT: Okay. 6 MR. ABRAMS: -- all of them. 7 THE COURT: Contracted with is not the same as comes 8 from, but okay. Let's suppose --9 MR. ABRAMS: I --10 THE COURT: -- appeal -- let's suppose Appeal Officer 11 X also has done work as a JAMS neutral, therefore, what? What 12 does that have to do with financial incentives? If the 13 litigants have availed themselves to the appeal and the appeal 14 was assigned to retired Judge X, and retired Judge X decides 15 the merits of the appeal, what's the prob -- what's wrong with 16 that? 17 MR. ABRAMS: So Your Honor --18 THE COURT: The fact that that person used to -- has 19 also a relationship with JAMS, therefore, what? 20 MR. ABRAMS: Those are great questions, Your Honor, 21 and that's why there's good cause for discovery. If Your 22 Honor, all these people are all shareholders and they are all 23 employees of JAMS working in their capacity as employees of 24 JAMS, then of course they have the goal as a shareholder to 25 increase return for the corporation. Those interests may be

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company very adverse to the interest of victims within this case and the equitable patterns associated with the trustee --

THE COURT: What if --

MR. ABRAMS: -- neutral position of them, and so all of that is relevant with the proper discovery, but just saying, look, we're not going to provide any of that information and we want you just to assume that none of them are shareholders when Justice Trotter stated specifically that he was, I don't think is a prudent path either.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. ABRAMS: And the last -- and also, Your Honor, the point of this as well is every victim is subjected to this process to put money in their pocket to rebuild their house, to get compensation for their lives, and I know Your Honor knows that, but this is essential to the dollars that are in victims' pockets, and there are very few victims, as the Court knows and as Mr. Molton knows, that were provided judicial review. So even if they proved it --

THE COURT: Mr. Abrams --

MR. ABRAMS: -- that --

THE COURT: -- I don't want to revisit that because they all were given a chance, and five of them chose to. It wasn't something arbitrary. It wasn't the luck of the draw.

Those five people came -- they squawked, and they were heard.

So what's the -- therefore, what?

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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
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              MR. ABRAMS: Your Honor, I --
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              THE COURT: What do you want me to do about that?
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              MR. ABRAMS: Well, one of the remedies that I think
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     should be considered by the Court -- and I'll save this for my
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     reply -- is that given all these things that the Trust isn't
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     going to be forthcoming and fully disclose what all these
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     financial incentives are for these people in these appeals
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     process, then victims should have a judicial review process, so
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     that if they have perceived injustices with their settlement,
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     that they can also come to the Court, and say, look, Your
     Honor, this was unjustly settled. I deserve a million dollars.
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     These appeals coordinators only provided 500,000 dollars, and
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     here's that justification, but to fact --
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              THE COURT: Wait a minute --
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              MR. ABRAMS: -- to have this unequal system --
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              THE COURT: -- Mr. Abrams --
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              MR. ABRAMS: -- where these appeals -- yes, Your
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     Honor?
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              THE COURT: Mr. Abrams, the appeals coordinator sent
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     the matter to an appeal. The appeals coordinator from what I'm
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     told didn't make the decision. So if --
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              MR. ABRAMS: But --
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              THE COURT: -- the appeal coordinator says here, your
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     appeal is going over to so and so --
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              MR. ABRAMS: But it's the same -- but again, Your
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PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Honor, to whatever extent this is the same corporation and that
these neutrals have conflicting duties to JAMS, Inc., that are
interfering with their neutral capacity and/or might be
favoring certain attorneys who are going to give them future
work in future cases where they could hire JAMS and other
attorneys who are less prominent, that they don't care whether
they're going to -- that won't have the ability to rehire JAMS
in a future case, all of these are biases that should be
understood.

The degree to which one particular neutral has acted on those biases is a different story, and they may or may not have acted on those biases, but until we know that information, we can't come to a conclusion on these matters. Again, if they're not going to be forthcoming with this information, then, yes. I do feel that opening up judicial review is really important to do. I hope it -- I hope that we are given information that shows that these neutrals are indeed neutral.

THE COURT: Okay. Your petition is noted.

MR. MOLTON: May I --

THE COURT: No --

MR. MOLTON: Your Honor --

THE COURT: I'm going to -- that's enough. I'm going around in circles here. I'm going to stick with the schedule that we have. I'll wait to hear from Mr. Molton, and Mr. French and Mr. Abrams, you'll be -- you'll hear my decision at

PG&E Corporation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1 that point, and as I say, it might very well invite a reply or 2 further information. I'm going to wait and see what the 3 trustee provides for all of us. So with that, I'm going to 4 include the hearing, and thank you all for your time. 5 IN UNISON: Thank you, Your Honor. 6 THE COURT: And I'm going to -- Ms. Parada, I'm going 7 to turn off my camera, but not log off because after all the 8 attendees exit, I want to talk to you and the rest of the staff 9 on to. Thank you all for your time. 10 THE CLERK: Yes, Your Honor. MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Judge. 11 12 (Whereupon these proceedings were concluded at 11:29 AM) 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

## CERTIFICATION

3 I, Ellen S. Kolman, certify that the foregoing transcript is a

4 true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Ellen S. Kalman

9 /s/ ELLEN S. KOLMAN, CET-568

11 eScribers

12 7227 N. 16th Street, Suite #207

13 Phoenix, AZ 85020

15 Date: September 14, 2022

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word (2)	13 (1)	7:21		